

ments in favor of sprinkling or pouring as the primitive and Scriptural method of baptism, if it be true that the Apostles and all the church until four or five hundred years ago understood by baptism *immersion*, and never sprinkled anybody except the sick. Our usages need reforming, for nearly all our ministers have a decided preference for the unscriptural and unhistorical method of affusion, even in the summer months, when immersion in any river or pond is attended with no pains or perils. The vast Orthodox Church of the East, which has over sixty million communicants in the rigorous climate of Russia, contrives to immerse all its men, women and children, and that thrice, and no doubt our ministers can find means to bestow the rite properly upon the few persons who are received into our churches during the winter months.

If the Baptists are *historically* right, and we wrong, let us discontinue our disputes with them as to the meaning of Greek verbs, and give due honor to the original mode of baptism both by our preaching and practice. Let us administer by immersion as the rule, and use methods only in cases of necessity. If not, will some one tell us why not?

If Professor Paine teaches that *the Apostles* sprinkled sick persons as a mode of baptizing them, he has need to examine still more critically into the evidence. But apart from doubt on that point, he must be reckoned to have done a valuable service to so much of the rising Congregationalist ministry as it falls to his lot to instruct during their novitiate. And it may be safely assumed that others besides his critic in the *Mirror* will ask further questions, and draw inferences.

[“WITNESS,” Aug. 21, 1875.]

#### “THE VOICE OF HISTORY ON BAPTISM.”

BY REV. WILLIAM SOMMERVILLE.

It is storied that a gentleman, passing along the street, found a little boy attempting to throw a load of coals into a cellar with a fire shovel, and asked him how he hoped to accomplish his task with that tiny tool. He replied, “By keeping at it.” Our Baptist brethren seem to have taken a lesson from the boy, and expect to secure universal assent to the exclusive claim of *immersion* to be called *Baptism*, by *keeping at it*. Fanaticism was never positive with less evidence than is the Baptist that immersion, and *immersion only*, is Baptism. Even after they would have us believe that the question has been conclusively settled, they still *keep at it*.

My attention was *invited* by the writer to an article expected to appear in the *Messenger* of July 28, the one, I presume, which came out under the above caption. I understood the invitation to be a sly challenge, and I accept it all the more cheerfully that the *Champion* appeared on the ground very destitute of armour.

It appears that the Professor of Church History, (Paine) in the Theological Seminary of Bangor, has been teaching his students, in effect, that “the *Apostles* and all the Church, until four or five hundred years ago, understood by baptism *immersion*, and never sprinkled anybody except the sick.” It further appears that the “Rev. A. L. Park, of Gardiner, was stirred up to write as follows to the *Christian Mirror*,”—after giving some particulars of the examination of the students, whose statements, in answer to questions put to them, fully agreed to the doctrine of their teacher,—“that none of the

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